

1997

Prospective Cuban Ambassador to Washington

Jose Miro Cardona, for whom the Cuban Government has requested agreement as its ambassador to Washington, seems unsure of the real nature of his mission. On 3 May he told a usually reliable source that, until a reporter informed him of the request, he had heard nothing about the assignment since it was discussed as a possibility with President Dorticos soon after Miro's recall as ambassador to Spain in January. He said he would accept the post only if convinced that Castro sincerely desires to solve what Miro considers significant differences in Cuban-US relations. Miro said he would break with the regime if Castro empowered him to seek a real improvement in relations and then showed a lack of good faith which caused the mission to fail.

Miro Cardona is a respected lawyer and political moderate who opposed Batista and was prime minister for the first six weeks after Batista's ouster. He resigned on amicable terms with Castro after insisting that, as the real locus of power, the revolutionary leader should assume the prime ministry. As ambassador to Spain, Miro was not close to the ruling coterie in Cuba during the period of its most significant political and economic actions and apparently has seen Castro only once casually since his return from Madrid. Thus it is difficult to believe that Miro would actually receive the strong mandate he says he requires in order to go to Washington.

The circumstances of Miro's appointment may reflect a growing dichotomy in foreign policy between Cuban officials who feel some modus vivendi with the US is necessary and those extremists led by Che Guevara and Raul Castro who would consider any diminution of the Cuban Government's viciously anti-US posture a capitulation to Washington. Since Cuba has been becoming increasingly isolated from other Latin American governments, the choice of Miro may also be a maneuver to impress hemisphere opinion.

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